

English Language Teaching through Project-Based Learning

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Abstract:

Project Based Learning is an instructional model. This model identifies problem and concludes with an authentic product. In this model, learner is an active problem solver. Subsequently, he/she becomes an investigator or a researcher and actively participates in decision making. Project works are useful in learning English as second language. The end-product of project-work provides opportunities for students to develop their confidence level and independent thinking, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning. Students' autonomy is strengthened when they are actively engaged in project planning with regard to choice of the topic. Project works increases cooperative skills, social, and group cohesiveness. Students have the opportunity to use language in a natural context and they participate in authentic activities which refer to activities designed to develop students' problem solving skills in language. These activities are important in out-of-schools contexts in order to develop learning to learn. By using Project Based Learning as an integrative learning, English Language teacher can integrate four language learning skills namely; 1) Listening Skill, 2) Speaking Skill, 3) Reading Skill and 4) Writing Skill easily.

Key words: Project based learning, English Language Teaching and Language Learning Skills

Introduction:

Project-based learning has been receiving popularity in education mainstream (Greenier, 2020). It is a teaching method that permits learners to learn effectively and pragmatically through conducting a project designed by the teacher. It creates an environment in which the learning process is carried out in the light of real-world focus rather than teachers' exploration about the real-life event through conventional teaching (Lee et al., 2014). In project based learning, the teacher takes role as a facilitator just guiding the students doing their projects systematically.

Project Based Learning is an instructional model. This model identifies problem and concludes with an authentic product. In this model, learner is an active problem solver. Subsequently, he/she becomes an investigator or a researcher and actively participates in decision making. The problem helps the learner to construct his/her knowledge about solving problem. When learner is engaged in solving a problem, he/she needs to use the language as an effective device. Thus, the problem creates the necessity to use the language during the whole process of investigation. When the learners get involved in real-life activities, the language learning takes as more significant activity.

The merits of Project Based Learning for the learners are: i) enhancing the learning motivation of learners and encouraging them to conduct useful project work; ii) increasing the ability among learners to solve the problem; (3) making learners active agents and successful in providing solutions to the problems; (4) enhancing collaboration among learners; (5) encouraging them to develop and practice their communication skill; (6) improving their skill to manage the learning resources; (7) giving them experiences in learning and organizing the projects in allotted time; (8) providing better learning experience for living in the real world; (9) activating them to implement their knowledge in the real world; and (10) making learning more interesting with a view to create a joyful teaching and learning process.

Project Based Learning Models for English Language Teaching:

Generally, there is four step model of Project Based Learning. This includes: (i) The teacher formulates expected competence or skill which needs to strengthened among students; (ii) The teacher will elucidate the project; (iii) The students will carry out the project; (iii) The students present the outcomes

of the project; and (iv) The teacher provides appropriate feedback for modifying students behaviour as per expectations on students.

Basically, there four phase model for successful project implementation in language teaching. This model provides practical guide for teacher with a view to arrange project activities systematically and implement in classroom situations.

First Phase: This phase is known as speculation phase. It includes choice of project topic as well as sensitization about it. This phase keeps learner in conducive environment for speculation and investigation. Topic will be selected after discussion and dialogue among all members of the group and the teacher. This initiation emerges from the curriculum and reading of various articles.

Second Phase: This phase is known as project design phase. It includes formation of groups and assigning of roles, methodology, sources of information, activities that take place outside classroom. If the activities are well structured and organized in better away, it will be very easy to carryout research.

Third Phase: This phase is called as project conducting phase. In this phase, student groups implement the project activities designed in the previous phase. Students gather information, process and categorize it. While gathering information, student may be allowed to discuss and get feedback from teacher or among group members. He/she can make synthesis of information gathered. The final products may be displayed in the school or in community. The project should be connected to social intervention and real life events.

Fourth Phase: This phase is termed as evaluation phase. It refers to the assessment of the activities from participants and discussion whether the formulated objectives of the project have been achieved or not. Evaluation focuses on assessment of the experience at individual and group level. It includes evaluation from others as well as self-evaluation. Evaluating the impact of project work in the context of English language instruction is the essential research endeavour for students.

Stix and Hrbek (2004) have provided seven step model for Project Based Learning: (i) The teacher gives real-life based projects for students; (ii) Students are main project designers; (iii) Students apply their previous knowledge on the project; (iv) The teacher and students will formulate criteria for assessment; (v) Students need to study the materials extensively; (vi) Students are active agents in creating the projects; (vii) Students will explain their projects before the class room; and (viii) Students have opportunity to conduct a reflection on given project.

Stoller (2002) has provided seven step model of teaching using Project based learning: (i) Students and teacher will select theme through mutual interaction; (ii) Students and teacher will fix the learning objectives and learning outcomes; (iii) Students and teacher arrange the project; (iv) The students gather information relating to the theme; (v) Students compile and analyze information; (6) Students will present the final results of the theme or product; and (7) Students will assess the project.

Thomas (2000) has given five criteria model for Project Based Learning such as (i) The project needs to be a central element to the curriculum; (ii) It is emphasized on questions of concepts and principles of a particular domain of the discipline; (iii) It has to motivate students with regard to constructive investigation; (iv) It should be learner centred at some extent; (v) It should be realistic in nature. The important features of Project Based Learning are: (i) It is learner-centered; (ii) It needs communicative competence of the learner; (iii) It is contextual in nature; (iv) It helps to promote social and soft skill; (v) It helps to promote language use and acquisition (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

Katz and Chard (1989) have refined the Project Based Learning as three phase model. This method or model aims to enhance students' motivation and to cultivate intellectual, creative and critical thinking skills as well as cooperative work using four language learning skills.

1. *Selection and refinement of problem:* In the first phase, topic will be selected and refined in researchable manner. The teacher and students make a list of topics based on personal experiences and authentic materials. These topics may provide connections between what they had read and what they had visualized in their daily lives. Teacher and students discuss relating to the topics which are to be explored in detail. Usually, students may elaborate various questions to be analyzed. These questions may contribute to focus the topic and predict the findings at the end of the project. In this stage, the students were focused on thinking about school problem and solving a school problem.

2. *Field work*: This is the central phase of project. Students can investigate about objects, events, places or topics. Field work allows them to have link with different contexts and activities. In addition to enhancing English learning motivation, students can draw skills from construct models, observations, and can verify their new understanding through field work. If students collect data or information relating to history, description and nutritional facts of fruits, collected information will provide understanding of the content systematically.

3. *Culminating and debriefing events*: In the last phase, students will demonstrate their acquired knowledge. They prepare and present information their own contribution and also through different artifacts. The previous proposed questions by the teacher will be answered by the students during the final phase. Here, the classroom environment becomes a rehearsal. Activities and different materials will allow students to experiment with the roles they use in real life. By the end of the activities and results, students and teachers will become common solution or conclusion based on the principle of collective participation.

Research Based Outcomes:

Project works are useful in learning English as second language. The end-product of project-work provides opportunities for students to develop their confidence level and independent thinking, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning (Stoller, 2006). Students' autonomy is strengthened when they are actively engaged in project planning with regard to choice of the topic. Project works increases cooperative skills, social, and group cohesiveness (Coleman, 1992; Brophy, 2004). Students have the opportunity to use language in a natural context and they participate in authentic activities which refer to activities designed to develop students' problem solving skills in language. These activities are important in out-of-schools contexts in order to develop learning to learn (Brown, 2000). Authentic activities are tasks with real world relevance and utility. They can be integrated across the curriculum and allow students to select appropriate levels of difficulty or involvement (Jonassen, 1991). Authentic activities have real-world relevance, provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from various perspectives, enhance collaboration and reflection, and allow competing solutions and diversity of outcome (Reeves et al., 2002).

Wang (2016) implemented to increase students' motivation by project based learning using survey method. Kavlu (2015) revealed that there was a significant positive improvement in the class using project based learning as a teaching method. Othman and Shah (2013) conducted a experimental study on the course content and learning English using project based learning. Azman and Shin (2012) investigated the students' views of implementing project based learning in learning English as a second language. Project-based learning provides opportunities for natural integration of language skills (Stoller, 2006). Project work progresses according to the specific context and students' interests, students have enhanced enjoyment motivation and engagement (Lee et al., 2014). Development of problem-solving and higher order critical thinking skills are possible through project based learning (Allen, 2004). Project-based learning skills are very important, since they are life-long, transferable skills to settings outside the classroom.

Project Based Learning as an Integrative Learning:

There are the six steps for language teacher to teach for integrated learning: (i) Initially, students need to understand the teacher's directions, then, students need to seek clarifications, and students have to follow note taking which are connected to listening, speaking, and writing respectively; (ii) students need follow the brainstorm sessions either in pairs or in small groups, and then go for using library resources or the internet resources with a view to collect additional information for the sake of listening, speaking, reading, and writing respectively; (iii) students are to be engaged in a decisionmaking process about how to use the collected information and proceed with the activities which pave the way for listening, speaking, and reading respectively; (iv) students have to carry out their plan of actions relating to reading, writing, speaking, and listening; (v) students have to use their notes taken during their group discussion and present to class what they have accomplished relating to reading, speaking, and

listening); and (vi) students are to finish the activity in association with whole class discussion for developing listening and speaking (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

Brown (2000) mentioned certain features of integrated learning: (i) There is an association between written language and spoken language; (ii) Interaction is the process of sending and receiving information; (iii) Production and reception are quite inseparable elements; (iv) The four language learning skills are relevant in language classroom; (v) One skill will blend the another skill; and (vi) The functional language focuses the integration of one or more skills.

English Language Teaching through Project-Based Learning: By using Project Based Learning as an integrative learning, English Language teacher can integrate four language learning skills namely; 1) Listening Skill, 2) Speaking Skill, 3) Reading Skill and 4) Writing Skill easily.

The indicators of listening skill are:

- i) Extracting the main idea from the text
- ii) Fixing the communicative purpose
- iii) Searching for implicit information
- iv) Searching for the explicit information
- v) Elucidating the meaning of words or expressions in a text as per context
- vi) Elucidating the reference of a pronoun in a text.

The indicators of speaking skill are:

- i) Defining the main idea of the speech
- ii) Giving supplementary details of the topic
- iii) Applying suitable words, phrases, or sentences
- iv) Applying appropriate language structure with regard to grammar to formulate suitable utterances
- v) Making appropriate pronunciation to express utterances.

The indicators of reading skill are:

- i) Extracting the main idea from the text
- ii) Fixing the communicative purpose
- iii) Searching for implicit information
- iv) Searching for the explicit information
- v) Elucidating the meaning of words or expressions in a text as per context
- vi) Elucidating the reference of a pronoun in a text.

The indicators of writing skill are:

- i) Defining the main idea of the speech
- ii) Giving supplementary/supporting details of the topic
- iii) Applying suitable words, phrases, or utterances
- iv) Applying appropriate language structure with regard to grammar to formulate suitable sentences
- v) Organizing text systematically using cohesive devices
- vi) Applying appropriate mechanics with regard to spelling, punctuation, and capitalization

Conclusion:

Project Based Learning in English language teaching is highly indispensable. In terms of language, specifically for speaking reading and writing, the Project Based Learning may provide positive results. Project Based Learning is fit in all the course modules of English language teaching. The language teacher should assign more reading materials for each project. Use of Internet material should be followed to ensure the authenticity of students' work. There is positive role of the native language in students' discussions regarding English language. A change from traditional-based lecture to the Project Based Learning approach would certainly reach expected learning outcomes of the learners.

Even though there is initial resistance to the Project Based Learning approach, students eventually will become highly motivated and may look forward to new possibilities in every semester.

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